

II.

ANCIENT COMMUNITIES AND TOPONYMS

Handwritten note: The Plain of Asea was the home of several communities in Antiquity.

The Plain of Asea was the home of several communities in Antiquity. Those known to us from the sources are presented here in the company of their respective bibliography. Entries are followed by an English translation. The reader is asked to consult the End Map for numerical positions, while references to modern authors may be checked in the Bibliography. A topographical sketch accompanies most sections devoted to the identification of a site.

A. Testimonia

i. Ancient

Herodotos ix.11

οἱ μὲν δὴ οὖν Παυσανίη ἐξεληλύθεσαν ἔξω Σπάρτης οἱ δὲ ἄγγελοι, ὡς ἡμέρη ἐγεγόνεε, οὐδὲν εἰδότες περὶ τῆς ἐξόδου ἐπῆλθον ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐφόρους, ἐν νόῳ δὴ ἔχοντες ἀπαλλάσσεσθαι καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἕκαστος ἐπελθόντες δὲ ἔλεγον τάδε. "Ὑμεῖς μὲν, ὦ Λακεδαιμόνιοι αὐτοῦ τῆδε μένοντες Ὑακίνθιά τε ἄγετε καὶ παίζετε, καταπροδόντες τοὺς συμμάχους· Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ ὡς ἀδικεόμενοι ὑπὸ ὑμέων χήτεί τε συμμάχων καταλύσονται τῷ Πέρσῃ οὕτω ὅκως ἂν δύνωνται· καταλυσάμενοι δέ, δῆλα γὰρ ὅτι σύμμαχοι Βασιλέος γινόμεθα, συστρατευσόμεθα ἐπ' ἣν ἂν ἐκεῖνοι ἐξηγέωνται. ὑμεῖς δὲ τὸ ἐνθεῦτεν μαθήσεσθε ὁκοῖον ἂν τι ὑμῖν ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐκβαίνη." ταῦτα λεγόντων τῶν ἀγγέλων, οἱ ἔφοροι εἶπαν ἐπ' ὅρκου καὶ δὴ δοκέειν εἶναι ἐν Ὀρεσθείῳ στείχοντας ἐπὶ τοὺς ξείνους... οἱ δὲ ὡς οὐκ εἰδότες ἐπειρώτων τὸ λεγόμενον, ἐπειρόμενοι δὲ ἐξέμαθον πᾶν τὸ ἐόν, ὥστε ἐν θώματι γενόμενοι ἐπορεύοντο τὴν ταχίστην διώκοντες... οἱ μὲν δὴ ἐς τὸν Ἴσθμὸν ἠπείγοντο·

"So Pausanias' army had marched away from Sparta, but as soon as it was day the envoys came before the ephors; they had no knowledge of the expedition, and were thinking to depart each one for his own home. When they arrived they said "You Lakedaimonians stay at home observing your festival of the Hyakinthia and disporting yourselves, while your allies are deserted; the Athenians for the wrong that you do them and for lack of allies will make their peace with the Persians as best they can, and thereafter, seeing that plainly we shall be the King' allies, we will march with him against whatever land his men lead us. Then will you learn what the issue of this matter shall be for you." Thus spoke the envoys; and the ephors swore to them that they believed their army to be even now at Orestheion [Oresthasion], marching against the strangers... Having no knowledge of this the envoys questioned further as to what the tale might mean, and thereby learned the whole truth; where they marvelled and took the road with all speed after the army... so they made haste to reach the Isthmos"

Thoukydides v.64

Ἐν τούτῳ δ' ἀφικνεῖται αὐτοῖς ἀγγελία παρὰ τῶν ἐπιτηδείων ἐκ Τεγέας ὅτι, εἰ μὴ παρέσονται ἐν τάχει, ἀποστήσεται αὐτῶν Τεγέα πρὸς Ἀργεῖους καὶ τοὺς ξυμμάχους καὶ ὅσον οὐκ ἀφέστηκεν. ἐνταῦθα δὴ βοήθειαι τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων γίνεται αὐτῶν τε καὶ τῶν Εἰλώτων πανδημεὶ ὀξεῖα καὶ οἷα οὕτω πρότερον. ἐχώρουν δὲ ἐς Ὀρέσθειον τῆς Μαιναλίας· καὶ τοῖς μὲν Ἀρκάδων σφετέροις οὖσι ξυμμάχοις προεῖπον ἀθροισθεῖσιν ἵεναι κατὰ πόδας αὐτῶν ἐς Τεγέαν, αὐτοὶ δὲ μέχρι μὲν τοῦ Ὀρεσθείου πάντες ἐλθόντες, ἐκεῖθεν δὲ τὸ ἕκτον μέρος σφῶν αὐτῶν ἀποπέμφαντες ἐπ' οἴκου, ἐν ᾧ τὸ πρεσβύτερον τε καὶ τὸ νεώτερον ἦν, ὥστε τὰ οἴκοι φρουρεῖν, τῷ λοιπῷ στρατεύματι ἀφικνοῦνται ἐς Τεγέαν.

"Meanwhile word came from their friends in Tegea that unless they should come quickly, Tegea would go over to the Argives and their allies, and already had all but done so. Whereupon succour was sent, both of the Lakedaimonians themselves and of the Helots, in full force, promptly and on such a scale as never before. These advanced to Orestheion in Mainalia, and gave orders to their allies among the Arkadians to get together and come close upon their heels to Tegea. After going all together as far as Orestheion [Oresthasion], they send home from there a sixth part of their force - in which were included the older and younger men - to keep guard at home, and with the remainder of their army reached Tegea."

Pausanias viii.44,2

μετὰ δὲ Αἰμονιάς ἐν δεξιᾷ τῆς ὁδοῦ πόλεώς ἐστιν Ὀρεσθασίου καὶ ἄλλα ὑπολειπόμενα ἐς μνήμην καὶ Ἀρτέμιδος ἱεροῦ κίοντες ἔτι ἐπὶ κλησὶς δὲ Ἱέρεια τῇ Ἀρτέμιδι ἐστὶ.

"After Haimoniai on the right of the road are some noteworthy remains of the city of Oresthasion, especially the pillars of a sanctuary to Artemis, which still are there. The surname of Artemis is Priestess."

Pausanias viii.3,1

Ὀρεσθεὺς δὲ Ὀρεσθάσιον οἰκίζει

"Oresthasion was founded by Orestheus."

Pausanias viii.3,2

Φιγαλία δὲ καὶ Ὀρεσθάσιον χρόνῳ μεταβάλλουσι τὰ ὀνόματα.
Ὀρεσθειὸν τε ἂπὸ Ὀρέστου κληθεῖσα τοῦ Ἀγαμέμνονος...

"Phigalia and Oresthasion in course of time changed their names,
Oresthasion to Orestheion after Orestes the son of Agamemnon..."

Stephanos of Byzantion

Ὀρεσθάσιον, πόλις Ἀρκαδικὴ ἂπὸ Ὀρεσθέως τοῦ Λυκάονος.

"Oresthasion, an Arkadian town named from Oresteus son of Lykaon."

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ἐν Τεγέαι πότι Δαιμαίθιδαν τὸν Ὀρεσθάσιον

"in Tegea next to Daimaithidas who is from Oresthasion."

Pherekydes, *FGrHist* 3: fragments 35a and b

τὸ δὲ Ὀρέστειον τῆς Παρρασίας κεχώρισται

"Oresteion is separate from Parrasia."

Pausanias viii.27,3

πόλεις δὲ τοσαύδε ἦσαν ὅποσας ὑπὸ τε προθυμίας καὶ διὰ τὸ ἔχθος τὸ
Λακεδαιμονίων πατρίδας σφίσιν οὔσας ἐκλιπεῖν ἐπείθοντο οἱ
Ἀρκάδες· Ἀλέα, Παλλάντιον, Εὐταία, Σουμάτειον, Ἀσέα, Περαιθεῖς,
Ἑλισσών, Ὀρεσθάσιον, Δίπαια, Λύκαια· ταύτας μὲν ἐκ Μαινάλου

"The following were the cities which the Arkadians were persuaded to
abandon through their zeal and because of they hated the
Lakedaimonians, in spite of the fact that these cities were their homes:
Alea, Pallantion, Eutaia, Soumateion, Asea, Peraitheis, Helisson,
Oresthasion, Dipaia, Lykaia; these were cities of Mainalos."

ii. Modern

LEAKE, 1846: 247, placed it at *Marmária*.

LORING, 1895: 26-31 and 47-52. placed it at *Avía Triádha*.

FRAZER, 1913: 412, placed it at *Ayía Triádha*.
 HITZIG-BLUMNER, 1907: 1,278, placed it at *Ayía Triádha*.
 PRITCHETT, 1982: 29-63, did not place it although he alluded to the fact that it may be found at *Ayía Triádha*.
 CURTIUS, 1851: 316-7, placed it on the Plain of Megalopolis
 BURSIA, 1872: 227, placed it on the Western side of *Óros Tsemeroú*.
 MEYER, R E: 1014 ff, suggested that it should be the Plain of Megalopolis.
 PETRONÓTIS, 1973: 157, placed it at *Kamarákia* on the Plain of Megalopolis.
 JOST, 1974: 181, suggested that it was located on the Plain of Megalopolis.
 PÍKOULAS, 1988: 107, placed it at the village of *Marmária* on the Western slopes of *Óros Tsemeroú*.
 DRAKÓPOULOS, 1991: 29-41, argued for its location at *Ayía Triádha*.
 DRAKÓPOULOS, 1992: identified its farthest limit as lying near to *Áyios Yiannákis*.

B. The Site. (fig. 7)

i. Identification

A careful examination of the sources has proven that the naming of Oresthasion bears no connection to the myth of Orestes. Oresthasion was originally named after Orestheus son of Lykaon but there is no evidence connecting Lykaon with the Plain of Megalopolis. The suggestion that Sparta attempted to manipulate the story of Orestes in order to establish herself on the Megalopolitan Plain by placing Oresthasion / Orestheion somewhere on that plain must be seen as irrational. It is, of course, known that Sparta needed to secure the Northern areas against Argos and so used the myth of Orestes to that effect; yet we have shown that the Plain of Asea was the area which Sparta had in mind rather than that of Megalopolis and this is further proven by the participation of the Oresthasians in the war against the Lakedaimonians (Pausanias viii.39,3-5) for Oresthasion was part of the Mainalian nation (Thoukydides v.64,3) just as were the towns of Pallantion, Asea and Eutaia, all of which were located East of *Óros Tsemeroú*. Indeed we owe our very knowledge of Oresthasion to certain military campaigns of the Spartans aimed in a Northerly direction. During these campaigns (Herodotos ix.11 & Thoukydides v.64) the Lakedaimonians had to move rapidly and thus had to avail themselves of the fastest Northerly route. The fact that on both

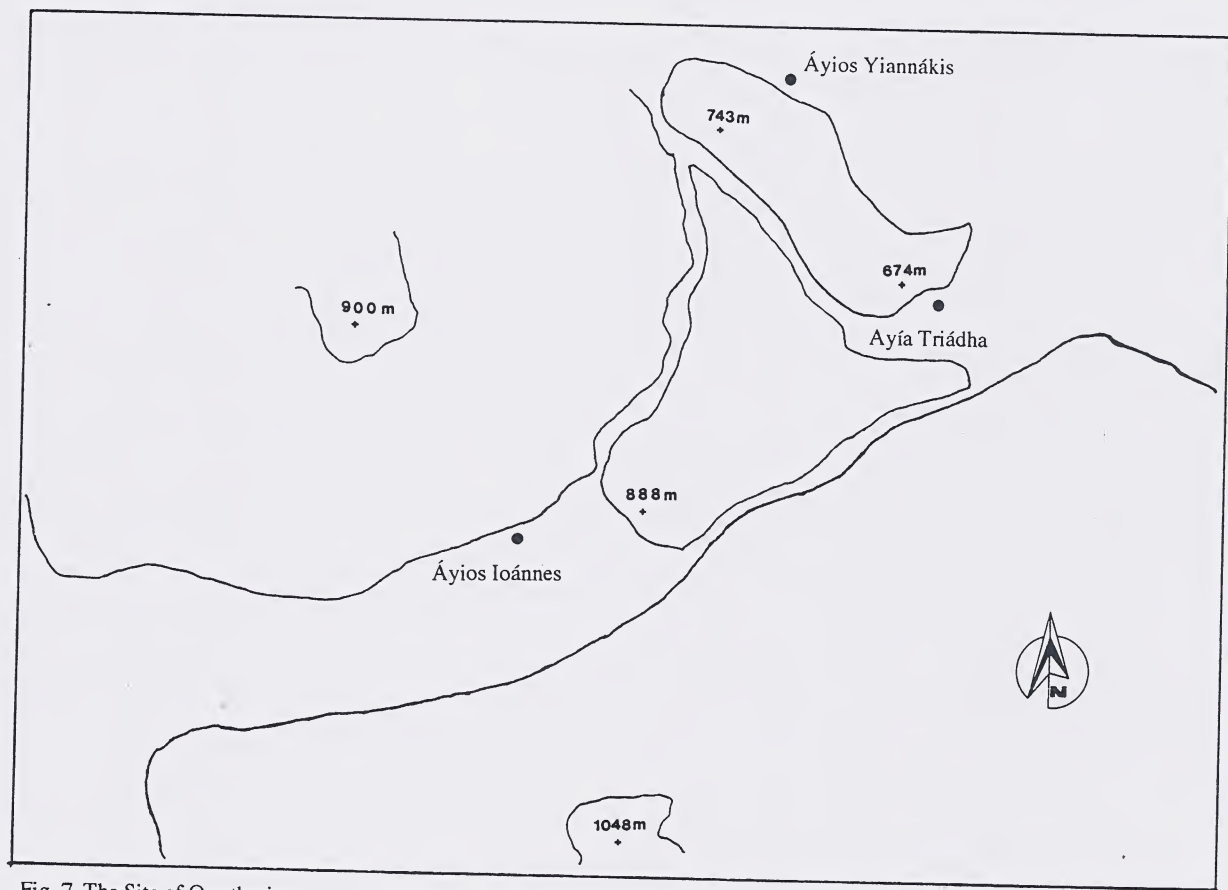


Fig. 7. The Site of Oresthasion.

occasions they chose as a stopping ground the town of Oresthasion indicates that the town was located directly on the quickest way to the North. The topographical evaluation of the region has shown that the fastest way was through the plain of Asea via the Eurotas gorge, through the pass near the modern village of *Skortsínou*. An examination of the Plain of Asea has produced evidence in support of Loring's theory which placed Oresthasion on the Eastern slopes of *Óros Tsemberoú* between the chapels of *Áyios Yiannákis* and *Ayía Triádha* (Drakópoulos, 1991). Our survey has added to that identification the extreme limit of the site, the area around the chapel of *Áyios Ioánnes* (Drakópoulos, 1992).

ii. Remains

a) *Ayía Triádha*. (Pl. 7.1-7.2)

Traces of a Byzantine fortification wall have been noticed at the top of the hill. Part of the ancient road has survived immediately to the East of the chapel with an upper retaining wall in excellent condition.

Pottery: Arch(Pik), Classical, Roman, Byzantine.

b) *Áyios Ioánnes*.

Several worked blocks of stone can be seen East of the chapel before one starts to descend toward the hill of *Ayía Triádha*.

Pottery: Classical, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine.

c) *Áyios Yiannákis*.

Blocks of ancient marble could be seen built in the walls of the chapel until 1990. Today the walls have been covered with a mud and cement mixture (Pl. 8.1-8.2).

Pottery: a limited number of Hellenistic sherds can be seen to the South of the chapel.

2. Aphrodision / Ἀφροδίσιον

A. Testimonia

i. *Ancient*

Pausanias viii.44,2

τὴν δὲ εὐθεῖαν ἰόντι ἐξ Αἰμονίων Ἀφροδίσιον τε ἐστὶν ὀνομαζόμενον
καὶ μετ' αὐτὸ ἄλλο χωρίον τὸ Ἀθήναιον.

"On the straight road from Haimoniai is a place called Aphrodision, and
after it another, called Athenaion."

B. The Site

The site of Aphrodision is indeed the most attractive mystery on the Asean plain. We know that Pausanias 'saw it' after noticing Oresthasion, and prior to his arrival at Athenaion. The principal site around which revolves the dispute over the location of Aphrodision is the chapel of Ἅγιος Γιαννάκης near the village of *Marmária*. Loring's report of ancient remains near a small chapel 200 yards North of *Ayía Triádha* led several investigators to believe that this small church may have been that of Ἅγιος Γιαννάκης near *Marmária* but the equation is not certain. In any case the very possibility that this may be the area which Pausanias called Aphrodision has to be disregarded. Ἅγιος Γιαννάκης constituted simply the Northern limit of the site of Oresthasion and, although prior to the rebuilding of the chapel one could see ancient marble reused in its walls (Pl. 8.1-8.2), no specific evidence exists for a temple of Aphrodite or even for a habitation site distinct from that of Oresthasion. In fact no ceramic evidence worthy of special consideration has been found in that area as well as no other physical remains of any sort. The site of Aphrodision has to be sought further to the North East of Ἅγιος Γιαννάκης midway between *Marmária* and ancient Athenaion, very close, I believe, to the *kalderimi* on the Northern bank of the Alpheios.

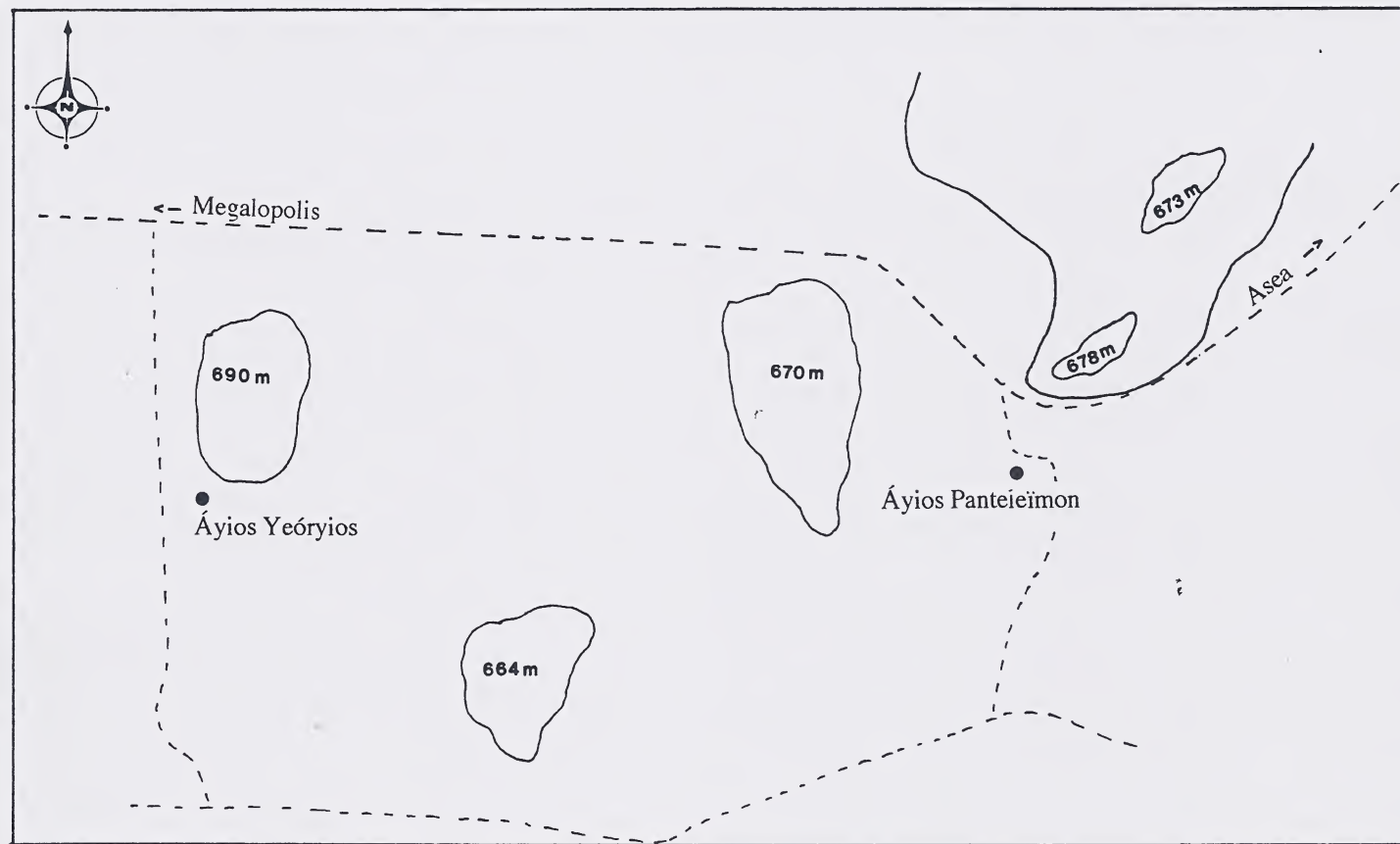


Fig. 8. The Site of Athenaion

A. Testimonia

i. Ancient

Pausanias viii.44,2-3

ἄλλο χωρίον τὸ Ἀθήναιον· τούτου δὲ ἐν ἀριστερᾷ ναὸς ἐστὶν Ἀθηνᾶς καὶ ἄγαλμα ἐν αὐτῷ λίθου. Τοῦ Ἀθηναίου δὲ μάλιστα εἴκοσιν ὁπωτέρω σταδίοις ἐρείπια Ἀσέας ἐστί,

"And [after Aphrodision] another [place] called Athenaion. On the left of it is a temple of Athena with a stone image in it. About twenty stades away from Athenaion are the ruins of Asca."

ii. Modern

LORING, 1895: 32, placed it on the site of *Áyios Pandeleímon*.

FRAZER, 1913: 413-4, placed it at *Áyios Pandeleímon*.

HITZIG-BLUMNER, 1907: 278, placed it at *Áyios Pandeleímon*.

KAHRSTEDT, 1954: 141, could not place it.

BOBLAYE, 1836: 173, reported traces of a wall West of *Áyios Pandeleímon*.

JOST, 1974: 46, did not place it.

PRITCHETT, 1982: 60-61, did not place it.

PÍKOULAS, 1988: 65, placed it at *Áyios Yeóryios*.

B. The Site (fig. 8)

i. Identification

The site of ancient Athenaion has been known by the local inhabitants for more than four generations. Remains that are easily noticeable on and around the low hill of *Áyios Yeóryios* - about 4.8km from the Asean akropolis - mark the Western limit of ancient Athenaion. Boblaye's observation of wall remains West of the small chapel of *Áyios Pandeleímon* at a distance of about 1km due East of the hill of *Áyios Yeóryios* may mark the Eastern limits of the same site. The distance of about 20 stades from the area between the two chapels to the Asean akropolis is in direct agreement with that given by Pausanias. The

Northern limits of the site may be set at a place called 'Okhtiá' a little to the North of the mid-distance just mentioned, although the ceramic evidence from a ploughed field in that area does not correspond chronologically. The Southern limit is the side of the hill North of the chapel.

ii. Remains

Architectural remains of Late Roman and Byzantine date can be seen on and around the hill of *Áyios Yeóryios*.

Pottery: EH(Mess), MH(Holm), LH(Bleg), Arch(Pik), Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine.